

MUSEUM OF COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY

The Agassiz Museum



HARVARD UNIVERSITY . CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138 . TEL. 617 495-2466

23 December 1980

Professor Donald W. Pfaff
The Rockefeller University
1230 York Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Professor Pfaff:


I write to nominate Dr. Charles J. Lumsden for a University Fellowship. Dr. Lumsden was trained as a theoretical physicist and biologist and has now expanded his interests to include cognitive psychology. His career has been closely similar to that of Robert May of Princeton and George Oster of Berkeley. I can say without hesitation that although these two scientists, who are already regarded as leaders in evolutionary biology, are perhaps among the ten mathematically best trained and theoretically most gifted of all biologists, Lumsden is their equal. He possesses total familiarity with applied mathematics, including statistics, and in fact has done original work in mathematics in connection with his thesis on theoretical biology.

Lumsden, who is now working with me as a postdoctoral fellow, is extraordinarily gifted. He is also exceptionally disciplined and hard-working, the requisites of a first-class scientist. After two years of effort together we have succeeded in creating the first systematic theory linking models from gene action through epigenesis and cognitive psychology to the statistical distributions of ethnography and sociology. I believe that this work, which could not have been achieved without Lumsden's exceptional inventiveness and expertise, will constitute the long sought rigorous linkage between genetics and culture and for the first time place cognitive and developmental psychology as the centerpiece of the structure.

Charles Lumsden also happens to be a gifted teacher, who has entranced audiences of faculty and students with crystalline accounts of mathematical modeling, the current state of theoretical physics, topics in human behavior, and other subjects.

I have taken the liberty of obtaining a set of materials from him, which I enclose.

Sincerely yours,


Edward O. Wilson
Baird Professor of Science

EOW:kmh

Enclosures